

STATE NOTIFIES MEDICAID CLIENTS OF HIPAA BREACH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DENVER – December 27, 2013 – The Department of Health Care Policy and Financing announced today that client information was sent from a work to a personal email address by a temporary employee of its contractor, the Colorado Community Health Alliance (CCHA). The list may have been sent for the employee's personal use in a separate business. The information did not include Social Security Number or other information that is commonly used for identity theft, but did include protected health information of 1,918 clients.

"We protect our client's information by using vendors who commit to protecting all confidential health information in their contracts with the Department," said Susan Birch, executive director. "The Department and our contractor are taking steps to notify and assist the clients who were impacted."

The email was sent on November 21, 2013 and discovered during an audit. CCHA notified the Department about this incident on November 22, 2013 and took immediate steps to terminate the employee.

The information in the email included names, dates of birth, Medicaid identification numbers, addresses, telephone numbers and health conditions. This information is considered protected health information and is protected under the <u>Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act</u> of 1996 (HIPAA). The Department and CCHA are investigating this incident and adding protections to further safeguard employee conduct and email communications in the future.

Colorado Medicaid is notifying by mail the clients impacted. The notification from the State urges clients who are contacted by someone they do not know, who knows their name, state Medicaid identification number, and/or health conditions, to immediately verify the identity of the caller and the reason they are calling.

Clients who have questions can visit Colorado.gov/hcpf or call CCHA at 1-855-627-4685.

About the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing: The department administers the Medicaid and Child Health Plan *Plus* programs as well as a variety of other programs for low-income Coloradans who qualify. The mission of the department is to improve health care access and outcomes for the people we serve while demonstrating sound stewardship of financial resources. For more information about the department, please visit Colorado.gov/hcpf.